

Unit 1: The Religious Impulse

1.3- Is There a God?



Expectations

RBV.02 analyze the similarities and differences between the central beliefs of various religions;

RBV.03 analyze and describe the connection between the human experience and sacred writings and oral teachings;

RBV.04 demonstrate how practice, ritual, and symbolism are external representations of the beliefs and principles of religion;

HEV.01 identify the function of religion in human experience;

ISV.04 employ at least one of the following research methodologies in an independent study: opinion survey, demographic study, in-depth interview, database search, and exploration of primary sources.

Is there really a God????

- Do we know that there really is a God?
- Here are three basic arguments that people use to “prove” that there is in fact a God.

Is there a God???

YES ARGUMENTS

1. Billions of people all over the world, at different times in history, believed in a God. While the proof is not in the numbers, religious people argue that despite different languages, customs, biases, and lifestyles, the belief in God is one of the few things that can unify people.

It raises the question, “How can so many people, living in different times with different realities, share such a basic concept and be so wrong?”

Is there a God???

YES ARGUMENTS

2. The physical realities of life on earth prove that a higher power made the world. Consider how interconnected we are - our dependencies and interdependencies as is evident in the food cycle. Does this interconnectedness not prove the existence of God?

Is there a God???

YES ARGUMENTS

3. If there is no God, why have so many people, with no other reason to do so, committed their lives to God or gods?

Consider the fate of Jesus' disciples, followers of Muhammad, Joan of Arc, and Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. What else can explain the convictions of these people?

Is there a God????

YES ARGUMENTS

These arguments can best be summarized by the following statement, “When you consider the realities of our existence both today and in the past, it is clear that there must be a God.”

Is there a God???

NO ARGUMENTS

1. Religions teach that God is just. However, the realities of life today seem to refute that. 25,000 people a day die of starvation. People face diseases like cancer and Aids every day. Heinous crimes are the lead story in virtually every newspaper and on every television broadcast. Would a just God really let this happen?

Is there a God???

NO ARGUMENTS

2. What religions call “proof” really is not proof at all. Yes, strange things happen that we may not be able to explain, but this does not mean the acts are divine or that they are miracles.

Is there a God???

NO ARGUMENTS

3. In the past people turned to religion and their faith to explain phenomena scientists now concur as natural occurring events. Many supporters of this argument point to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution as refuting the religious belief of creationism.

Is there a God???

- These arguments can best be supported by another position.
- “When you really think about it, God has the best job ever. Hundreds of people die in a plane crash. That’s sad and it was the plane’s fault. Terrorists kill innocent people in a suicide bombing. It’s free will. But a child survives a dog attack, and it’s a miracle! You cannot blame all the bad stuff on whatever you want and the good stuff on God. It is clear that God just doesn’t exist.”

Is there a God

- There are, quite literally, hundreds of reasons people point to when debating the question, “Is there a God?” The important thing to remember is if someone really wants to believe in God, you can find any number of reasons to support your belief. If you do not believe in God, there are just as many reasons to support a belief that God, whether He or She does not exist. It really is up to the individual to decide!